

THE GREAT MARCH

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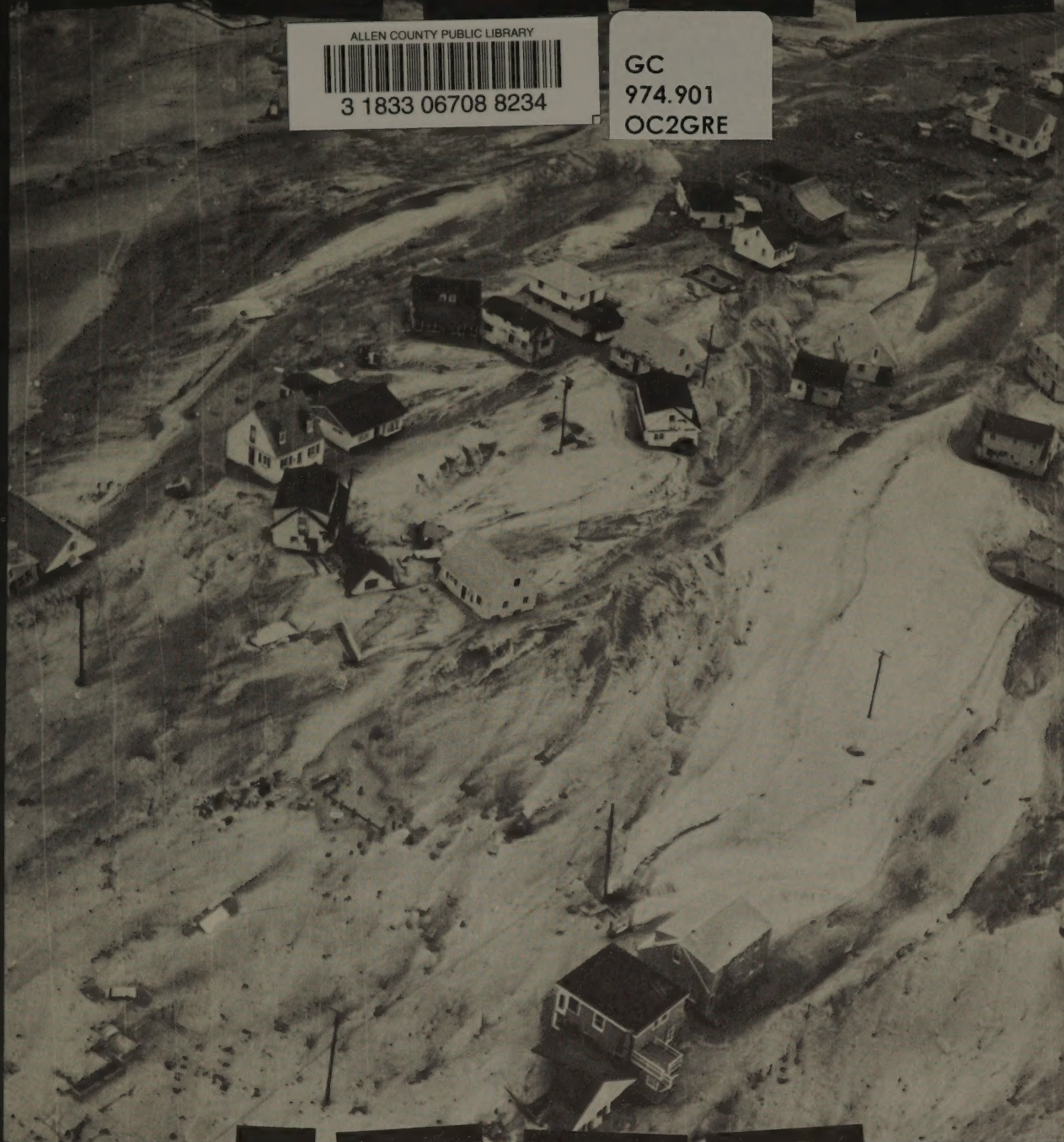
STORM

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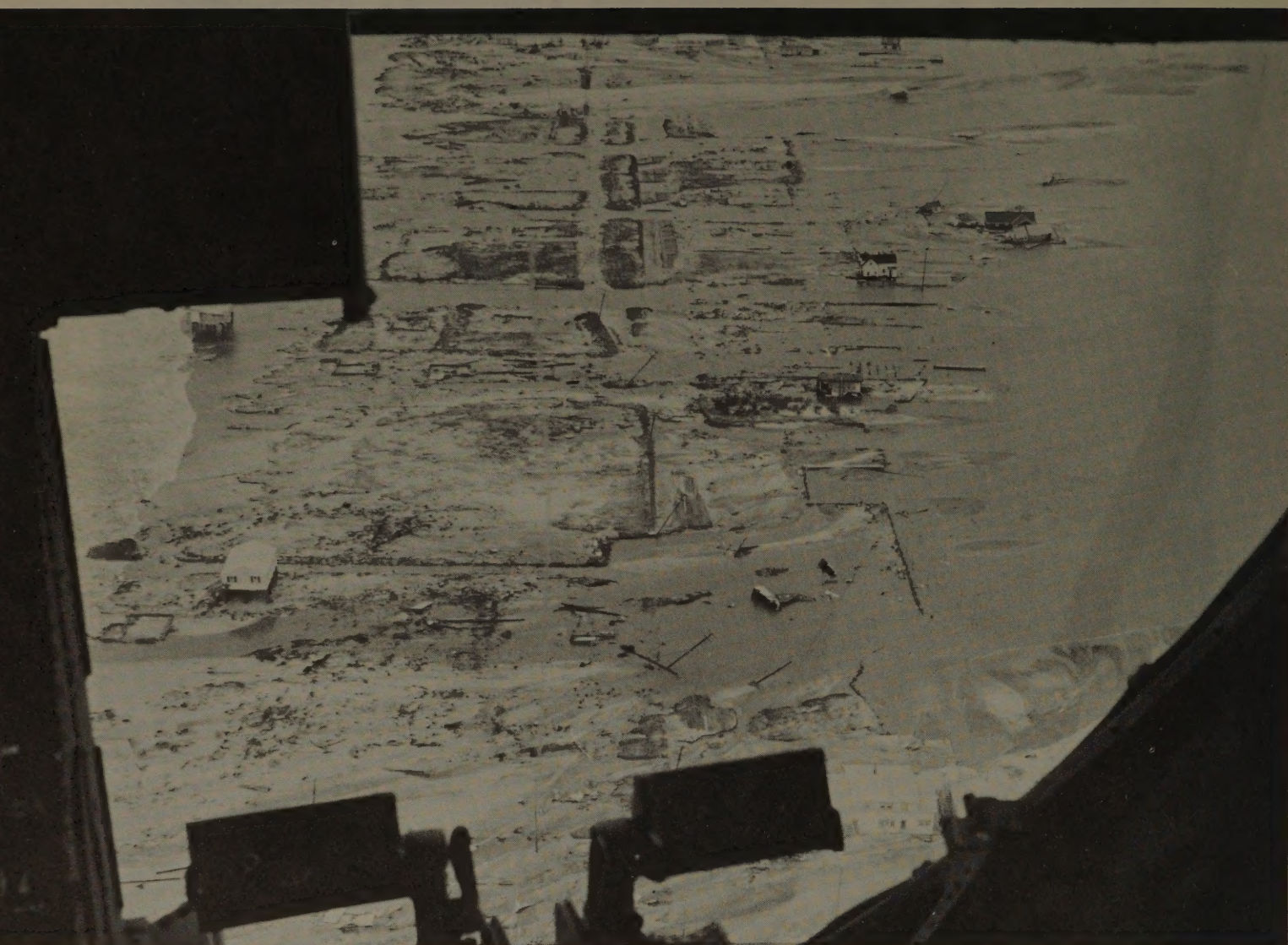


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The Ocean County Sun



On March 6, a violent northeast storm — perhaps the worst within memory — smashed the New Jersey coastline, rendering it helpless and almost unrecognizable. The storm brought to Ocean County a thick swirling snowfall, roaring winds, and towering seas. When the skies cleared, a jagged trail of destruction was left. In the following pages you will see graphic study of the grotesque chaos created by nature on a rampage.

All Photos have appeared in the Ocean County Sun

Little of the exposed Ocean County coastline was spared damage as gale winds, wet snow, and thundering surf combined in an awesome display of the elements in a murderous mood.

The wind-driven snow took a toll of power and telephone facilities, while the wind itself whisked away housetops and television antennas. The battering surf claimed whole houses, bulkheads, streets, and sand dunes.

The initial damage estimate to the New Jersey shoreline totaled over \$80,000,000 for public and private property, and it is now inching upward almost daily.

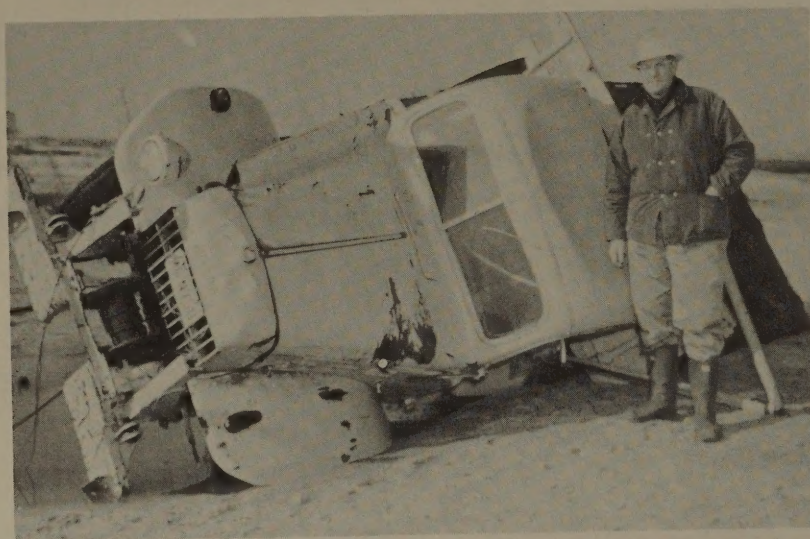
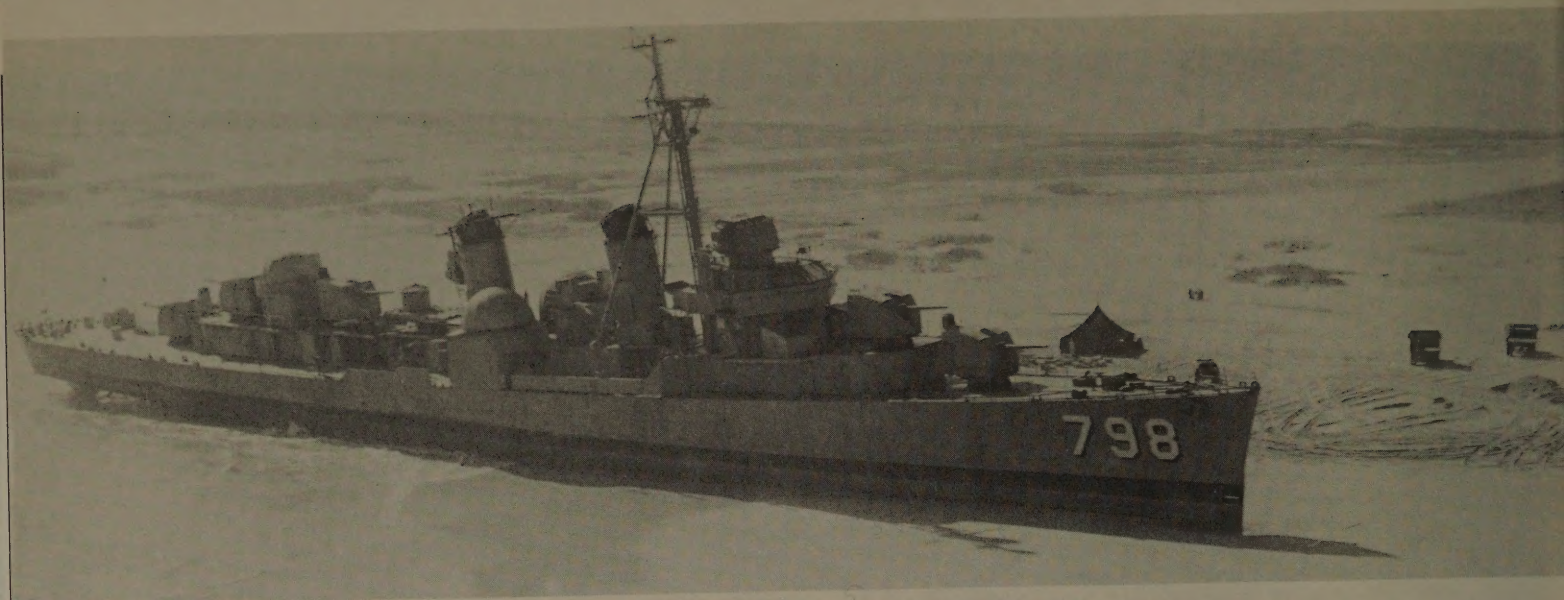
In Ocean County, nine persons lost their lives — three of them on a rescue mission to evacuate residents of the Holgate area at Long Beach Island.

Well over 1,000 residents of besieged Long Beach Island found shelter from the storm at Southern Regional High School and at various fire houses. Many of them were forced to flee before the storm with only the clothes on their backs. Most were faced with the cheerless prospect of returning to non-existent homes, or to homes heavily damaged.

At Beach Haven, a Navy destroyer, the U.S.S. Monssen, was beached. The Loveland Town bridge over the Bay Head-Manasquan canal at Point Pleasant collapsed.

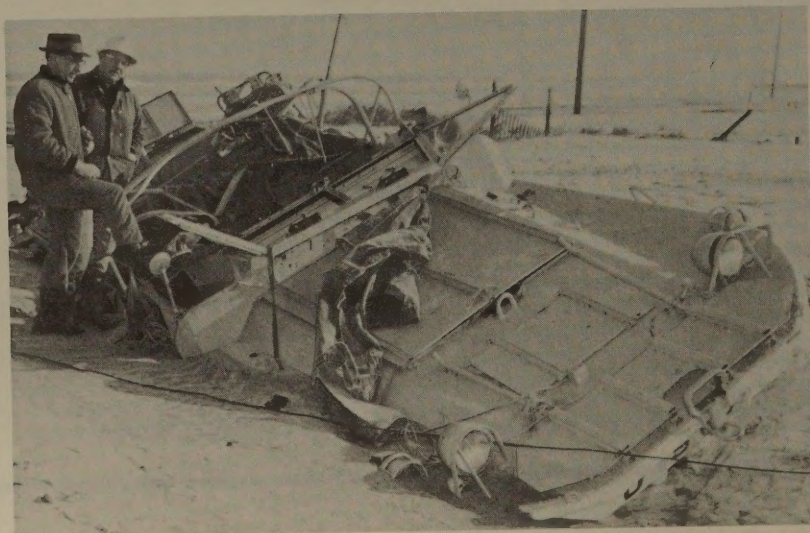
Sections of Barnegat Bay were littered like a log jam with timbers and debris from docks, homes, and boardwalks. And damage to mosquito control facilities in the tidelands was extensive.

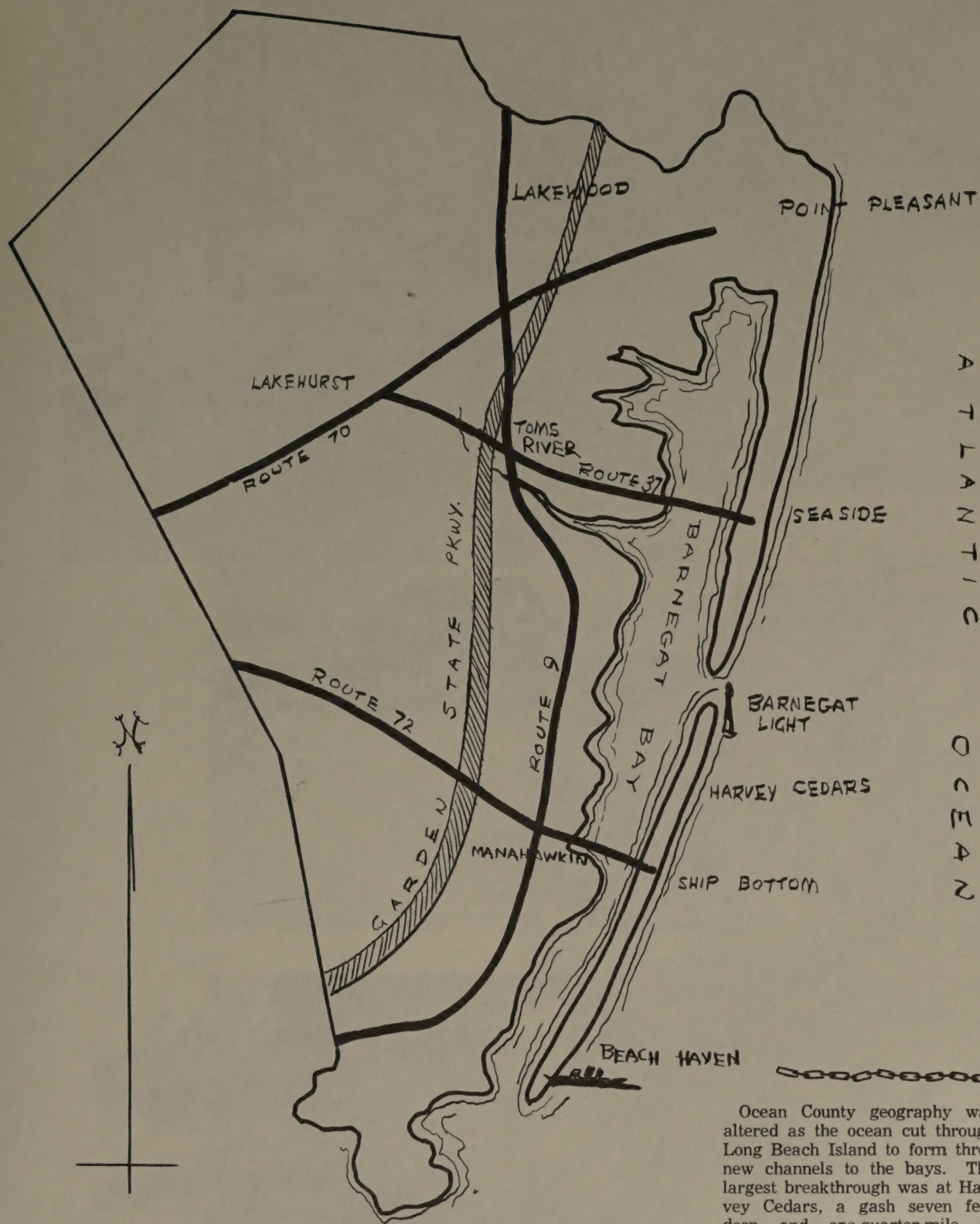




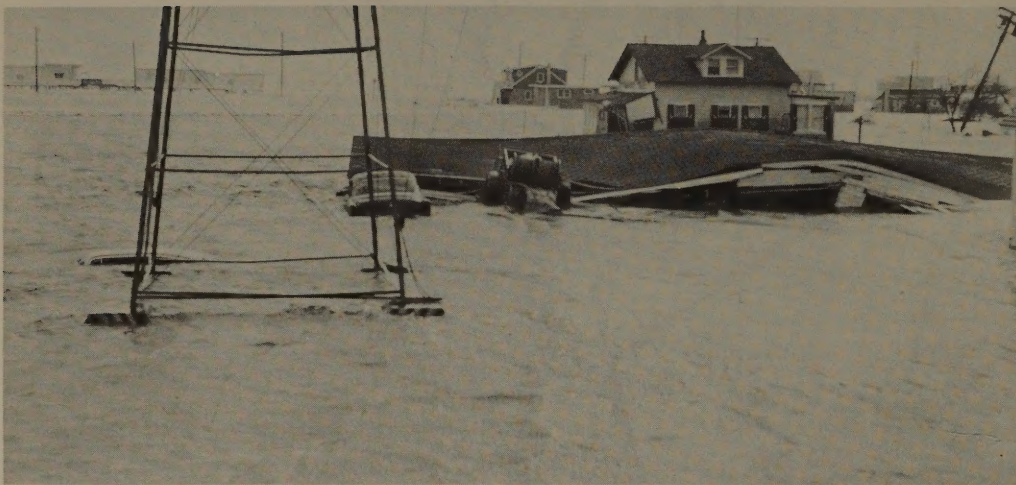
Long Beach Island

Beach Haven





Ocean County geography was altered as the ocean cut through Long Beach Island to form three new channels to the bays. The largest breakthrough was at Harvey Cedars, a gash seven feet deep and one-quarter-mile in length. Other breakthroughs occurred at Holgate and just below Barnegat Light Borough.



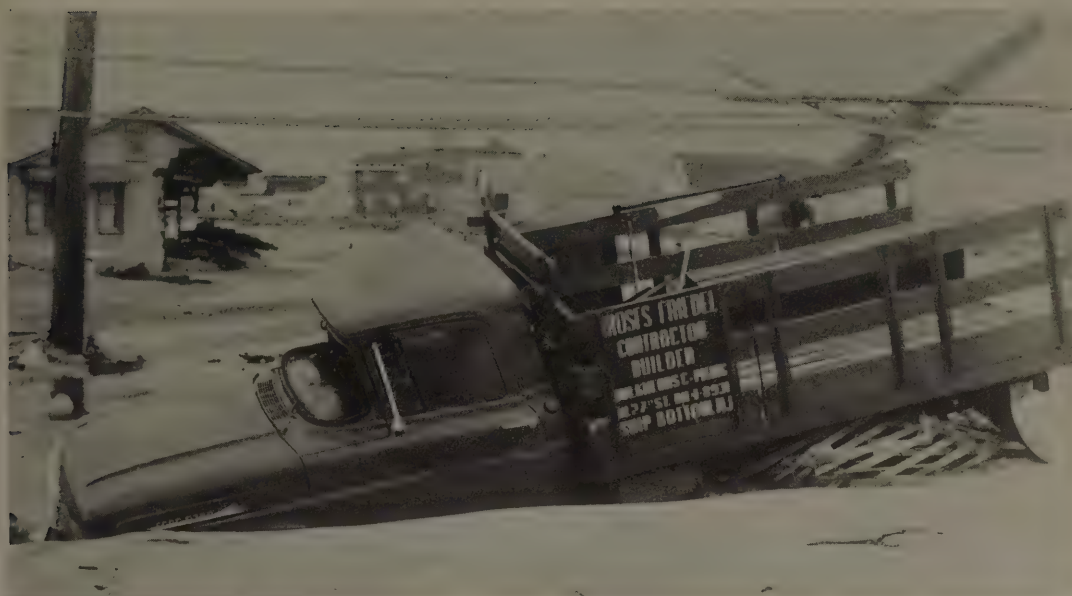
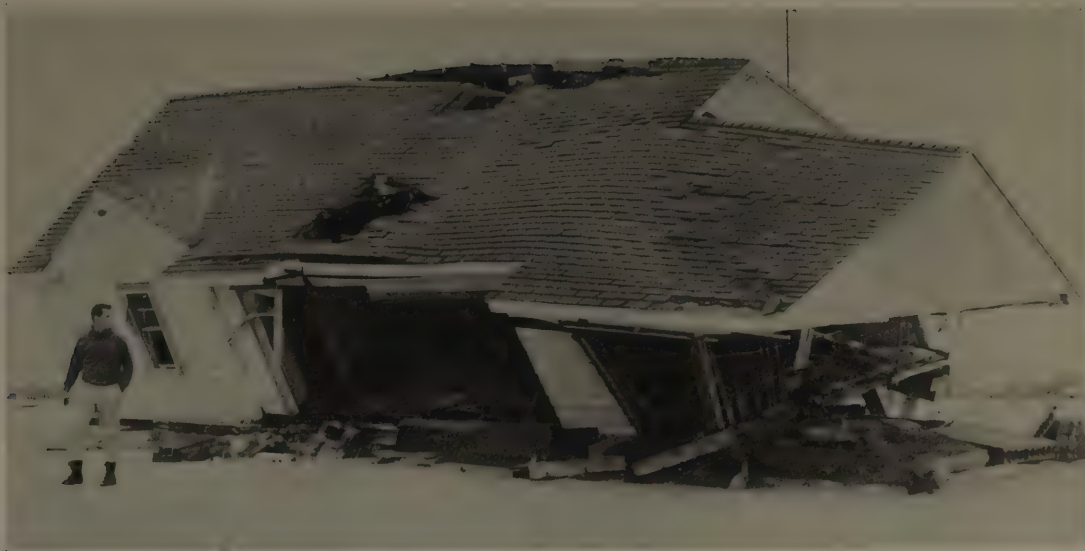
Long Beach Island



Hard Hit

LONG BEACH ISLAND







Of all Ocean County areas, Long Beach Island was hardest hit. Permanent residents were evacuated in droves; power, heat, and water facilities for the most part were knocked out.

Public and private property damage hit a peak at Long Beach — which was also the scene of all Ocean County fatalities.

The most severely damaged community on the Island was Harvey Cedars. This resort of mostly summer residents had over half of its homes destroyed. Only a few buildings escaped without damage to some degree.

In Beach Haven, nearly 1,000 residents were forced to leave their homes. Officials reported that 15 to 20 homes were totally destroyed.

There was no damage report from the Island's most northern community, Barnegat Light; but, residents said damage was extensive.

In Long Beach Township, from 200 to 300 homes were destroyed. Some 700 residents of the community fled from their homes during the storm.

Ship Bottom reported from 50 to 60 homes destroyed or damaged, and Surf City reported another 60 homes lost.

In all Island communities, sand dunes were washed away, as were bulkheads and streets.



DAMAGE DOWN THE COAST



Ortley Beach



Ortley Beach

Normandy Beach





EVACUATION and REBUILDING





Although individual property owners absorbed fearful losses at the hands of the storm, it soon became apparent they would get little or no comfort from their insurance policies. When asked how property owners would fare, the Insurance Information Institute of New York said that since the main damage was caused by waves, wash, and flooding, policy holders could expect to collect little if anything.

If prospects to repair private storm damage through insurance appeared bleak, the prospects of persons with mortgages on non-existent homes appeared positively grim. State banking circles were quick to point out that they did not favor any plan to forget mortgages, even if the houses were washed to sea.

But despite disappointments such as these, it soon became clear that the people of Ocean County would not be defeated. At this time, the digging out process is almost completed, and the long struggle to rebuild order out of chaos has begun. And rebuilt the areas will be — you can be sure of it just by looking into the faces of the people. They have absorbed punishment at the hands of nature, shaken off the shock, and now they're fighting back with every tool they can lay their hands on.





When it became apparent that it would be necessary to evacuate residents from low-lying, wave battered sections of the county, Coast Guardsmen teamed with local disaster units.

It was during the evacuation that Long Beach Township Police Chief Angelo J. Leonetti, Robert F. Osborn, and Kenneth G. Chipman, lost their lives aiding others.

They were attempting to remove persons from the Holgate area when a wave apparently engulfed their truck, sweeping them to sea.

Emergency shelters were established at Southern Regional High School in Manahawkin, and at various points on high ground on Long Beach Island.

As the number of persons forced from their homes swelled, private homes inland opened their doors. It was reported that in such inland communities as Toms River, individual homes were sheltering from 10 to 12 persons in some cases.

Following the storm, state and local police set up highway check points to the most severely damaged areas in an effort to prevent looting. In most areas those who had been evacuated were allowed to return to their homes. But in many places, even summer residents were denied entrance for a few days. Although several arrests were made, looting was kept well under control.





NIGHT ON LONG BEACH:

'I'd Give Anything For Daylight' As Flood Rages

BEACH HAVEN — "We watched the houses floating by us, and pretty soon we wondered who was doing the floating and who was standing still." The speaker was Navy Chief Journalist Robert W. Bliss, Lakehurst Road, Toms River. "We could only see by poking flashlights out the window, and we spotted electrical wires shorting out in the distance. It was a real haunting feeling, I can tell you."

The Navy newsman was one of 35 persons who got a frightening firsthand look at the force and devastation of last week's disastrous storm from the 100-year old Bonds Coast Guard Station here. They were marooned there last Tuesday night.

Chief Bliss, stationed at the Lakehurst Naval Air Station, was sent to the devastated Island early Tuesday, along with Cmdr. Larry Reagan, Lakehurst Service Information Officer, to keep an eye on the destroyer USS Monsen, which ran aground near the Coast Guard station at 4:25 a.m. Tuesday. With them was Gary Sayres, Photographer Third Class.

They traveled on a Coast Guard amphibian driven by Chief Boatswain John Buxton, and reached the island at approximately 1:00 p.m. "It wasn't too bad yet," Chief Bliss said, "but there was a lot of water in the street. The gusts of wind were hitting 60 miles an hour, and I realized I had brought too much gear with me."

"On the way down to the station, we found big chunks of the macadam gone from the road. We had to speed up to get across them to keep from getting stuck. We passed the truck where three men were killed that morning. (Long Beach Township Police Chief Angelo Leonetti, Commissioner Kenneth Chipman and Robert Osborne.)"

When the party reached the southern tip of the island, Photographer Sayres snapped the disabled vessel. "We got up to within 10 or 15 feet of the ship," the chief related. "The sand was being blow all over, and it felt like a sand-blasting machine hitting you in the face. Even the water would sting and burn."



By this time, Coast Guardsmen were attempting to evacuate the surrounding area. "One of the ducks made four trips to Beach Haven. We got the photographer out on the last run, because Third Naval District Headquarters in New York was hollering for pictures of the ship. He took the film, and I kept his camera to save space on the duck.

"There wasn't a heck of a lot that could be done," Chief Bliss went on. "They needed deep-water vehicles to move around. We knew by then we'd have to stay the night.

By now, the roadway north to the Manahawkin Causeway and the mainland had been cut off. A few civilians began to gather in the station, seeking refuge from the havoc being wrought in nearby low-lying residential areas.

"Cmdr. Reagan and I decided to get out of the way," Chief Bliss said, "and let them work. All of a sudden, we heard shouts outside, 'The Duck's overturned!' One of the kids in the duck got back inside the building. He was in shock, and he had tremendous tremors. He was half frozen from the water and the 30-degree temperature outside." Coast Guardsmen quickly stripped off his wet clothes and put him under a hot shower. He had been a crew member of an amphibian still making rescue missions, evacuating civilians to the Coast Guard station.

"Then we heard more shouts for help outside," Chief Bliss went on, "and we found another man lying on top of a truck, exhausted." That man was Coast Guard Chief Boatswain John Buxton, driver of the ill-fated amphibian. He told this story after he thawed out:

The rescue party of which he was in command had staked out their route because flood waters had obscured all local roads. The duck had rescued seven people from the nearby trailer camp owned by Gus Lindell, 18 Harding Avenue. Included in the party were Mrs. Lindell and Mr. and Mrs. Robert Kenney.

The duck bogged down in a sand bank with a punctured tire. As Coast Guardsmen attempted to free the craft, it was broached by a 10-foot wave. Realizing the vehicle was useless, Chief Buxton made sure that the entire party wore life jackets, and ordered them to link elbows, forming a human chain. However, they were knocked into holes, and jarred apart by heavy seas, and scattered apart. When they reached the station, the Lindells

and Kenneys were missing. Mrs. Kenney and Mr. Lindell were found floating in the streets of Ocean City, some 30 miles away. The others are missing and presumed dead.

Meanwhile, Chief Buxton found himself being dragged under by a heavy, water-soaked jacket. He was at first unable to remove it, but he got it off as far as his elbows, faced the floodwaters, and let the current pull it off. He then spotted the disabled truck a short distance away, and climbed on its roof, exhausted. Coast Guardsmen from the station rescued him.

"I felt the chill he was suffering just from seeing him," Chief Bliss said.

Also rescued as he floated helplessly past the station was Joseph Urschel, 54. "We warmed him up in a hot shower, and put him to bed in the bunkroom. He asked me for a cigarette, but found he couldn't smoke it. But an hour later he was real bright-eyed."

By now, the crowd in the station had grown to 21 Coast Guardsmen, 12 civilians, and the two Navy men. They had been in constant phone communication with the mainland, but now they lost their electricity, heat and light. Water poured into the basement, and pumps were set up to reduce flooding. The group in the station knew they would soon be without water and heat.

"Those young kids in the Coast Guard station there had a lot of guts to go out in those currents and temperatures," commented Chief Bliss. "They were nearly all between 17 and 19 years old, and they had a lot of courage."

"We were in telephone contact with the Naval Air Station all the time," he went on, "and we got a lot of calls from civilians wanting to know tide and weather conditions. They didn't know that was the only contact we had with the outside."

By now, the only light in the station came from two 60-watt bulbs hooked up to an auxiliary generator. "We could feel the building shake a bit up on the second floor, and the water kept coming up.

"We looked outside, and we saw a car with the taillights on. That gave us an anxious moment, because the car was almost entirely under water, but we realized the water had shorted out the electrical system.

"A little later, the phone rang," the chief went on, "and it was a call from a local woman who operated a store down the street.

'You break in there and take anything you want,' she said. Two of our fellows secured lines around their waists and went out, and came back shortly with bread, milk, candy bars and cigarettes. So we all had smokes for a while.

"The way I felt was, I'd give anything if it would hurry up and get daylight," Chief Bliss said. "Then we could at least see what was going on. If we had to get out at night, I wouldn't have known which way to go."

"When the sun finally came up, we had our first look at the damage. When the tide came back in Wednesday morning, we saw a 2,000-gallon fuel tank float by. It had been buried in the ground nearby. One of the cement pillars on the station porch collapsed, and a section of the porch broke off. Then we found out we had a whirlpool in the basement, and the pumps were about to give out.

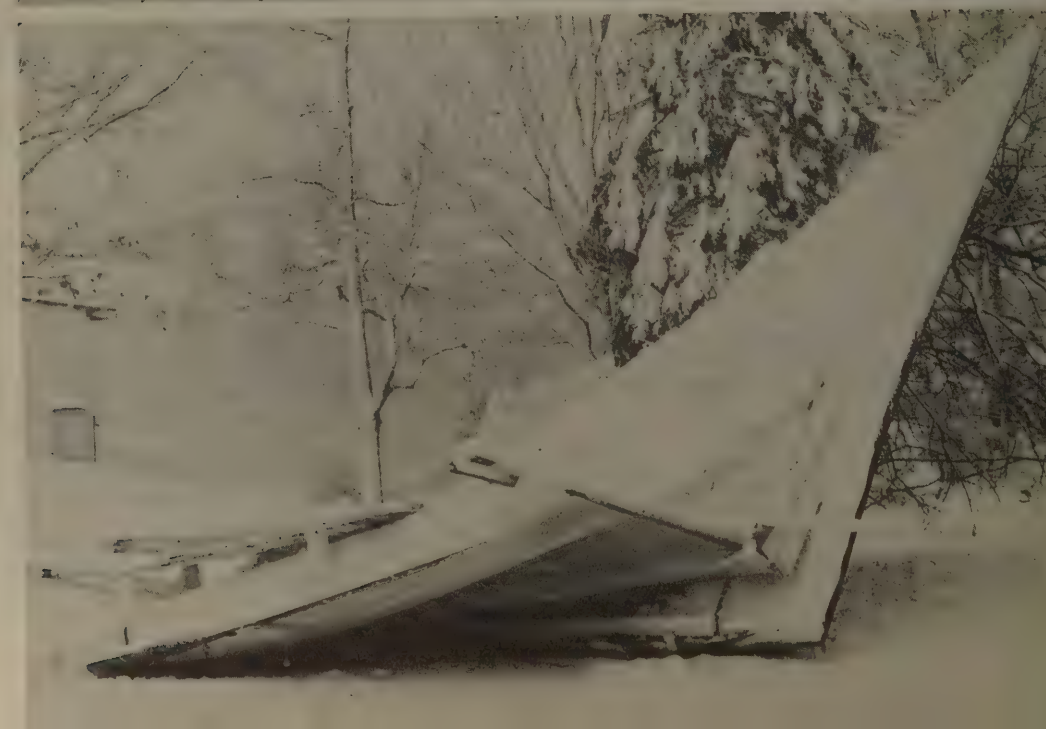
"Then we heard a Coast Guard helicopter overhead. We alerted Coast Guard Headquarters in New York, and had them stand by. They had to decide whether to abandon the station. The helos were already airborne when the decision to get out was made."

At approximately 10:30 a.m. last Wednesday, helicopters began evacuating the group in the station. In 30 minutes the job was done. The group was landed at a ball field in Tuckerton. Civilians were taken to the local First Aid Station, and Chief Bliss and Cmdr. Reagan were flown back to Lakehurst by Navy helicopter. Their work was only beginning, as telephone lines were jammed by newsmen seeking information on the latest effects of the storm.

They had little time for several days to reflect on their first-hand look at an ocean gone awry. Chief Bliss' comment: "It was a real full night's entertainment. I'll never forget it."



Toms River



INLAND

Even communities well away from the coast were not spared completely from the storm ravages. Snow clogged county roads, and several thousand families lost electricity for varying periods.

In riverfront communities such as Toms River, Beachwood, Island Heights, Pine Beach, and Ocean Gate, low streets were flooded and docks disappeared under water for several days as high winds kept the extreme high tides from receding.

Sheltered marinas along the rivers were for the most part spared, but marinas in the open bay areas reported widespread damage to boats and equipment.



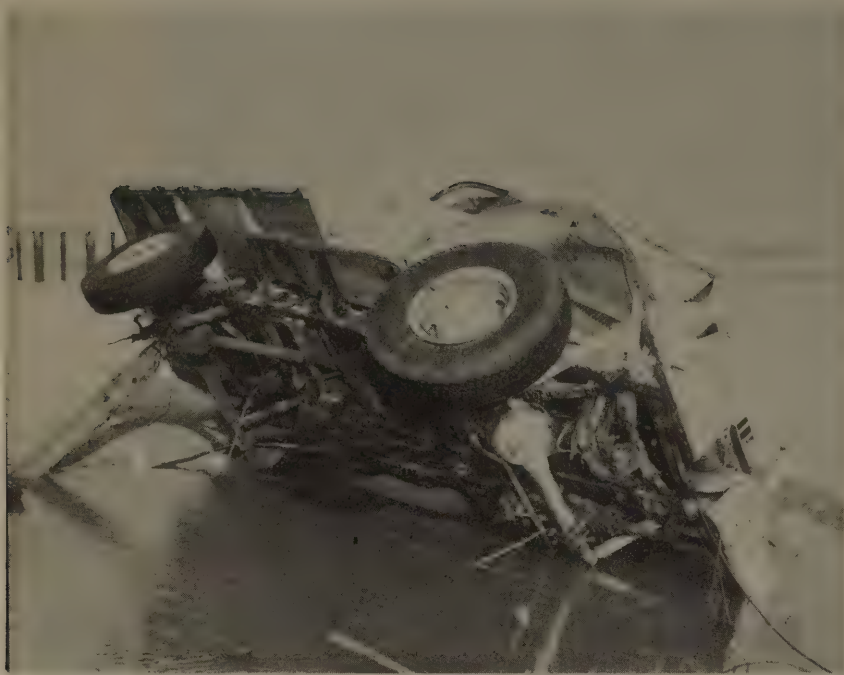
Point Pleasant Beach

Facts & Figures

(Damage)

New Jersey (public and private property)	\$80,000,000
New Jersey (beaches and protective works)	\$25,000,000
Monmouth and Ocean County (beaches and protective works)	\$14,000,000
New Jersey (mosquito control facilities, state parks, marinas)	\$ 700,000
Ocean County (roads)	\$ 1,350,000
Ocean County (public beaches)	
(Bay Head)	\$ 500,000
(Mantoloking)	\$ 500,000
(Brick Township)	\$ 100,000
(Dover Township)	\$ 300,000
(Lavallette)	\$ 400,000
(Seaside Heights)	\$ 450,000
(Seaside Park)	\$ 600,000
(Berkeley Township)	\$ 150,000
(Barnegat Light)	\$ 475,000
(Harvey Cedars)	\$ 1,000,000
(Surf City)	\$ 400,000
(Ship Bottom)	\$ 400,000
(Long Beach Township)	\$ 2,600,000
(Beach Haven)	\$ 550,000
Ocean County (state parks, marinas)	
(Island Beach State Park)	\$ 150,000
(Barnegat Light State Park)	\$ 10,000





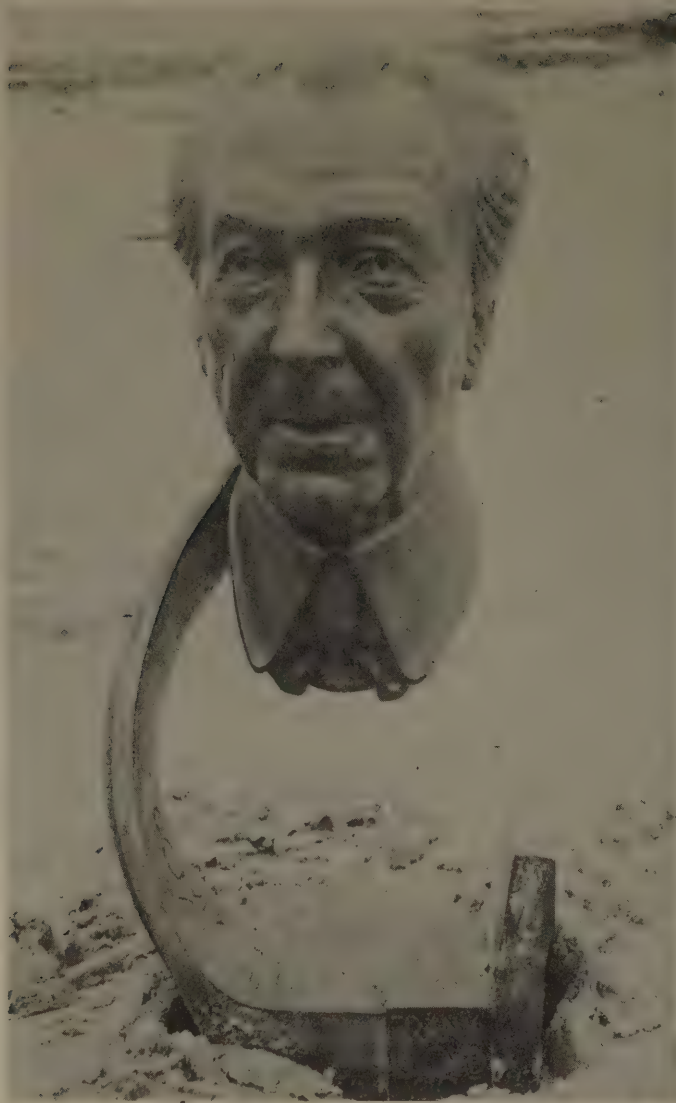
YOUR PILOT'S NAME
IS SIMON

AND YOUR CREWMAN
IS SMITTY

GLAD TO HAVE YOU
ABOARD. ENJOY YOUR
TRIP AND SEE THE
SIGHTS.

THANKS

FOR THE RECORD — This score card kept track of the refugees airlifted from storm-ravaged Long Beach Island in the Naval Reserve helicopter flown by Lt. Cmdr. J. B. Simon, 38 Thomas Street, Toms River. His crewman was Thomas W. Smith, Old Freehold Road, Toms River. Their craft airlifted nearly 250 people during the disaster. Dogs and cats tied for animal honors, as the reservists flew three each.



IN THE SAND — The SUN's Jack Boylan was among the first to discover this bust of the late architect Frank Lloyd Wright in the sand near Bay Boulevard, Harvey Cedars. Investigation revealed it came from the nearby home of Boris Blai, retired dean of the Tyler School of Fine Arts, Temple University. Mr. Blai carved the bust for Florida Southern College, where both men received honorary doctorates in 1950. News-men informed him of its whereabouts, and he set out to recover it.





Long Beach Island



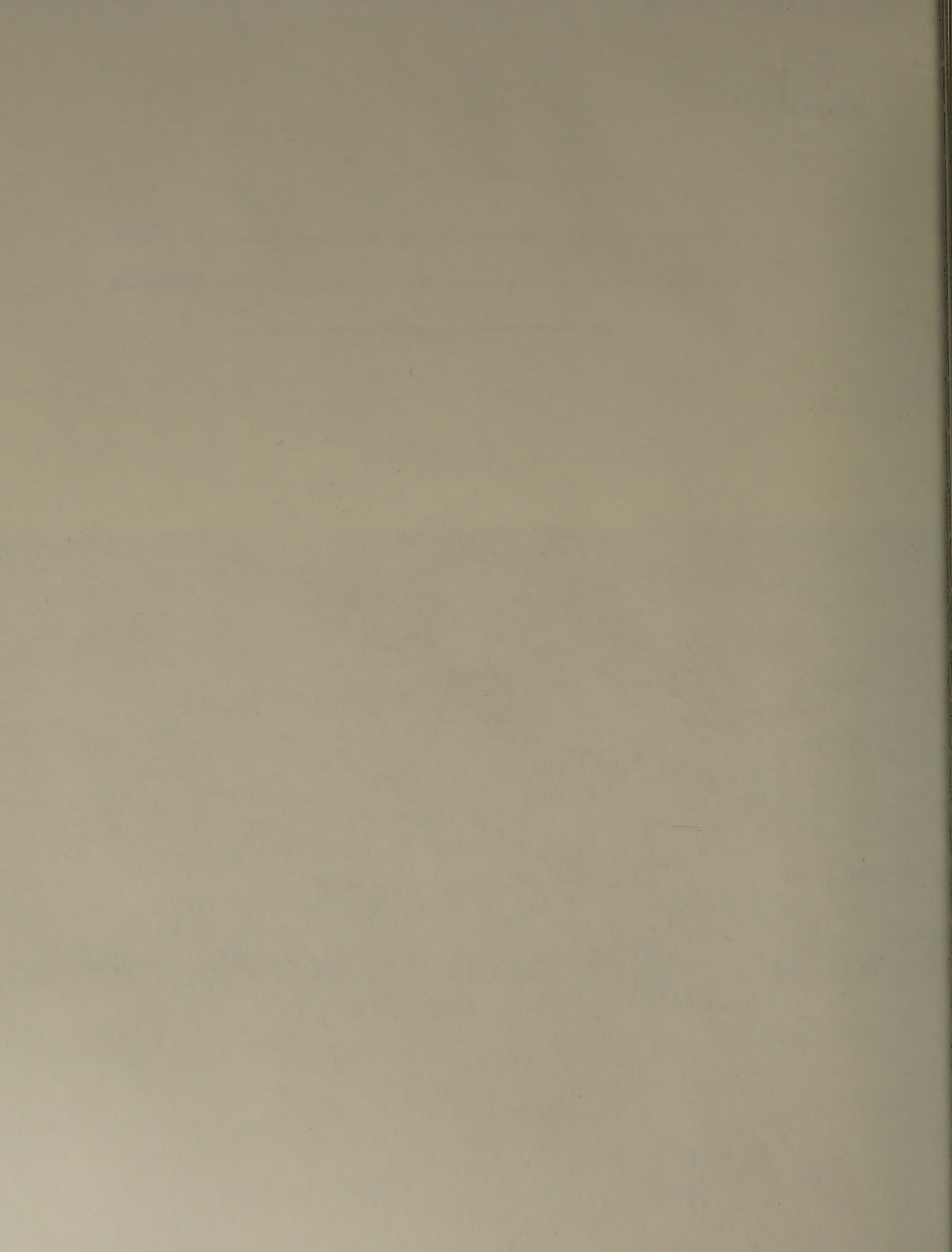


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